



Flood Control District

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County Receives Award to Develop Restoration Plan for the Gila River

PHOENIX, Ariz. (Nov. 5, 2014) – Communities along the Lower Gila River will benefit from a Gila River Indian Community grant that was awarded to the Flood Control District of Maricopa County (District) today. The Maricopa County Board of Supervisors, who serve as the District's Board of Directors, voted to accept the award for the District's Salt Cedar Management and Native Vegetation Restoration Plan and Pilot Project for the Gila River (Project).

The goal of the Project is to analyze strategies to provide enhanced flood protection by managing the overgrown salt cedar in the Lower Gila River channel. One potential strategy is the restoration of native vegetation such as mesquite, willow and cottonwood trees. Salt cedar (tamarisk) was initially used in the United States for erosion control and aesthetics. Today, the invasive salt cedar in the river channel impedes flood flows and poses fire hazards to adjacent properties.

"Salt cedar is a non-native species that has overtaken portions of the river channel thus increasing the floodplain and decreasing safety for neighboring communities," said Clint Hickman, who represents District 4 on the Board of Directors. "This award will allow us to create the best plan of action to manage the salt cedar overgrowth and increase public safety along portions of the Gila River."

Over the next year, the Project team will study an 18-mile stretch of the Gila River from the confluence with the Agua Fria River to the bridge at State Route 85. Currently, salt cedar comprises nearly 60 percent of the Project study area. The team will construct a pilot program that considers intergovernmental permits, salt cedar treatment options and long-term maintenance and monitoring of the restored areas.

The Flood Control District of Maricopa County provides information to Maricopa County residents so that they can reduce their risk of injury, death, and property damage from flooding, while still enjoying the natural and beneficial values served by floodplains.

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